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region of Wabar. There is always some substance in these Arab tales.'

The story of King 'Ad resembles the legends of King Arthur and has been handed down by Arabian poets and singers through the centuries, and was told by Shahrazad to King Sha...riyar in the *Thousand and One Nights*. Just as some historians believe that Arthur was no mere hero-king of myth, but an early British chief, so is it probable that 'Ad Ibn Kin'ad, a sheikh of considerable power in the dim past, ruled part of the Rub-al-Khali and built a city there.

This story has many detractors, amongst them Mr. St. John Philby, a noted Arabian traveller and Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, who claims in his book, *The Empty Quarter*, to have discovered the 'lost city' near Ibrahima, at a place called Al Hadida, which he identifies with Wabar. Yet all he found were the large craters formed by a meteor which fell here in prehistoric times, the shape and appearance of which, he supposes, gave rise to the legend of a buried city. Valuable as Mr. Philby's discovery undoubtedly was to the scientific world, his theory that these craters are the 'lost city' of the Rub-al-Khali is flimsy in the extreme and cannot be accepted by serious archæologists. In fact, in another part of his book he expresses the belief that the city of King 'Ad probably existed in Yeman or the Hadramaut.

The incident is referred to in Mr. Philby's introduction, in which he confesses his bitter disappointment at being beaten in the 'race for the Rub-al-Khali' by his old rival, Mr. Bertram Thomas, who crossed the desert a year before him in 1931.

There is no doubt that he believed that he alone had found the 'lost city', and was satisfied in his own mind that others which existed in the desert were not identifiable with that of King 'Ad's.

That such a city existed I have no doubt, and a great many intelligent Arabs are convinced of it. Whether it was the residence of King 'Ad is a matter for conjecture, but there are legends connecting Wabar with the modern Hilla, the site of ancient Babylon, and a great caravan route which transported frankincense, gold, pearls and spices to Iraq is said to have crossed the desert in this direction.

A great deal of nonsense has been said and written about the Rub-al-Khali. The crossings of Mr. Philby and Mr. Thomas were notable achievements in the history of exploration, but several